

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1657

Introduced by Assembly Member Gomez

February 11, 2014

An act to add Section 68092.1 to the Government Code, relating to courts.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1657, as introduced, Gomez. Courts: interpreters.

The California Constitution provides that a person unable to understand English who is charged with a crime has the right to an interpreter throughout the proceedings. Existing statutory law requires, in any civil or criminal action, as specified, a sign language interpreter to be appointed for a party or witness who is deaf or hearing-impaired and generally requires the payment of these court interpreters' fees to be a charge against the court.

Existing law also requires, in any specified action or proceeding relating to domestic violence, an interpreter to be provided by the court for a party who does not proficiently speak or understand the English language to interpret the proceedings in a language that the party understands and to assist communication between the party and his or her attorney. Existing law generally requires court interpreters' fees to be paid by the litigants in civil cases, as directed by the court, but further requires the fees of an interpreter to be waived for a party who needs an interpreter and appears in forma pauperis.

This bill would authorize the court to provide a court interpreter in any civil action or proceeding at no cost to the parties, regardless of the income of the parties.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 68092.1 is added to the Government
2 Code, to read:
3 68092.1. Notwithstanding Section 26806 or 68092, or any
4 other law, a court may provide an interpreter in any civil action or
5 proceeding at no cost to the parties, regardless of the income of
6 the parties.

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